

## **POPs/PIC Update for EPA November 2019**

### **Stockholm Convention (POPs)**

OCSPP participated with DOS in the fifteenth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-15) of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which took place October 1-4, 2019 in Rome, Italy. The POPRC reviews chemicals to determine if they meet the criteria laid out in the Stockholm Convention to be considered persistent organic pollutants. If it determines a chemical meets the criteria, it may recommend the chemical for listing under the Convention. Participants included committee members, government observers, civil society organizations, and industry representatives. The technical agenda items of POPRC-15 included listing proposals for methoxychlor (a pesticide) and dechlorane plus (a flame retardant), a draft risk management evaluation for perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), its salts, and PFHxS-related compounds (part of the PFAS group of chemicals), and consideration of intersessional workplans.

The POPRC decided to move methoxychlor and dechlorane plus to the next stage of the POPRC's review process, setting up intersessional workgroups to prepare draft risk profiles for each chemical. The majority of the discussion for methoxychlor was focused on defining the chemical identity due to the presence of two isomers. For dechlorane plus, there were many reservations regarding the cited studies to support adverse effects, which were in line with concerns expressed by the U.S. delegation. However, the committee thought there was sufficient information to indicate there was potential for damage to the environment and that dechlorane plus should move forward to the next stage of review, which allows the committee to gather additional information during the intersessional period.

The committee also concluded that PFHxS, its salts, and PFHxS-related compounds will be recommended for listing without exemptions at the next Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, at which time the Parties will decide whether and how to list it. The U.S. delegation ensured that all U.S. comments were addressed, including statements clarifying U.S. information.

Draft workplans to cover the preparation of any needed draft risk profiles and risk management evaluations, along with any guidance documents was adopted. Intersessional work plans were also adopted for the review of information related to specific exemptions for listed chemicals decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE) (a flame retardant used in textiles, electronics, and building materials) and short-chain chlorinated paraffins (primarily used in metalworking applications and PVC processing). POPRC-16 will be held in September 2020 in advance of the 10th Conference of the Parties in May 2021.

### **Rotterdam Convention (PIC)**

OCSPP participated in the fifteenth meeting of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC-15) of the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC), which met October 8-11 in Rome. The CRC completed its technical work to support the Convention's goals of promoting shared responsibility and cooperation in the trade of hazardous chemicals and environmentally sound use of such chemicals. Over 90 participants attended, including CRC members and observers from parties, governments, industry, and civil society.

The CRC reviewed notifications from countries that took a domestic final regulatory action (FRA) that banned or severely restricted three chemicals/groups of chemicals: amitrole (an herbicide), decaBDE, and nonylphenols and nonylphenol ethoxylates (NP and NPEs) (surfactants used in a variety of industrial and consumer products).

For amitrole and NP/NPEs, the Committee concluded that some of the notifications for each chemical meet the criteria but noted that the successful notifications come from only one PIC region, whereas successful notifications from two regions are required for listing. Therefore, no further action will be taken on amitrole or NP and NPEs until a country from another PIC region notifies that it has taken an FRA that bans or severely restricts the use of these chemicals. For decaBDE, the Committee agreed that the notifications received meet the criteria and recommended that it be listed in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention, making it subject to the PIC procedure.

The Committee also reviewed the draft decision guidance document (DGD) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and PFOA-related compounds, which will provide information to parties when trading in these chemicals.

The CRC-15 continued to flexibly apply its past practice and precedents to reflect the complexities of the global chemicals trade, while continuing to encourage countries to notify the Convention when they take a final regulatory action. CRC-16 will be held in September 2020 in advance of the 10th Conference of the Parties in May 2021.